

Summary

This dissertation deals with the notion of centration in the work of Teilhard de Chardin, the notion being examined with regard to two related aims: 1) to illustrate the logical structure of Teilhard's Christian theory of evolution, and 2) to explain the relation between centration carried out by created beings and centration assigned to God as the focal point of evolution. In other words: to explore the connection between fundamental freedom attributed by Teilhard to created beings and culminating in human beings according to him, and God's freedom demonstrating itself in controlling the universe and directing it to a goal being the fullness of being (*pleroma*).

The first part presents Teilhard's life and the contexts of his work.

The second part explains the main notions of Teilhard's theory and metaphysics, such as "consciousness", "spirit", "energy", "centro-complexity", and "matter", and relates them to the notion of centration. Centration is presented here as an activity of the consciousness consisting in the unifying formation of multitude by its interconnection with different types of relations around one centre. In such unification, the main law of evolution manifests itself – the Law of Differentiating Unity. This means that parts unified in such way start differentiating again. What is presented here is the fact that increasingly complex wholes come into being during evolution, containing more mutually cooperating centres, and also the importance of communication networks of relations between the individual centres for the qualitative increase of being. The main interpretation step taken here consists in explaining radial energy, i.e. the centration energy, and its division into three "forces": consciousness, love and spontaneity (faith) that have served as a foundation of all types of relations from the beginnings of the universe, but that change in how they act depending on the degree of complexity of the centre using them for unification.

The third part illustrates centration in Teilhard's conception of ethics as a process going on from the beginning of creation, becoming a human task at the level of noosphere. The question to be answered by Teilhard's ethics is how to proceed in this process for evolution to be fulfilled. Teilhard's conception of evil is explained here and his theory of virtues necessary for a successful unification of noosphere is elaborated on. The main part of the dissertation is an attempt to expand on Teilhard's notion of freedom – in light of its definition as "control of chance". Freedom is defined here as the ability to create one's *own shape* based on a form (set of information) to increase the complexity of a whole. The process of realisation of freedom is called self-organisation or creativity, and consists in the "control of chance" through conveying

the form of the multitude being unified. This implies that freedom is another name for centration performed in the right way, which leads to increase of complexity.

The fourth part shows centration as a part of a cosmic process with a particular beginning and end. The beginning of the process is explained in interpreting Teilhard's conception of creation, and the meaning of the whole process is demonstrated in interpreting his perception of an immortal soul and its task in evolution. Questions are presented here related to the future of mankind as a species and its responsibility for the form of the final "work of evolution". Teilhard claims that the goal of evolution is the unification of all creation with God in the fullness of being. This is, in fact, the highest level of unity in diversity. This gradual process of differentiation of the original homogenous unconnected multiplicity by means of freedom (= unifying centration) is the meaning of Cosmogogenesis.

The conclusion deals with Teilhard's conception of orthogenesis, i.e. the explanation of the goal of evolution and reflections on how in a universe directed to a specific goal freedom of being is preserved, including fundamental freedom / human creativity. The freedom of being is presented here as an activity that is not weakened by the controlling; on the contrary – the controlling provides for it. According to Teilhard, freedom is essentially dependant on the activity of the Centre of the World controlling the process of evolution by creating the structure of space and time (demonstrating itself as the laws of evolution), and it is this structure that makes the centration of all other centres possible.